

Keehn's at Brogan's Station Points Of Demonstration

Project Description

- NE corner of Judkins and Yakima Street, Mount Baker neighborhood.
- Four and one half lots, on a corner, currently vacant, mature trees.
- New construction of 18 owner-occupied units.

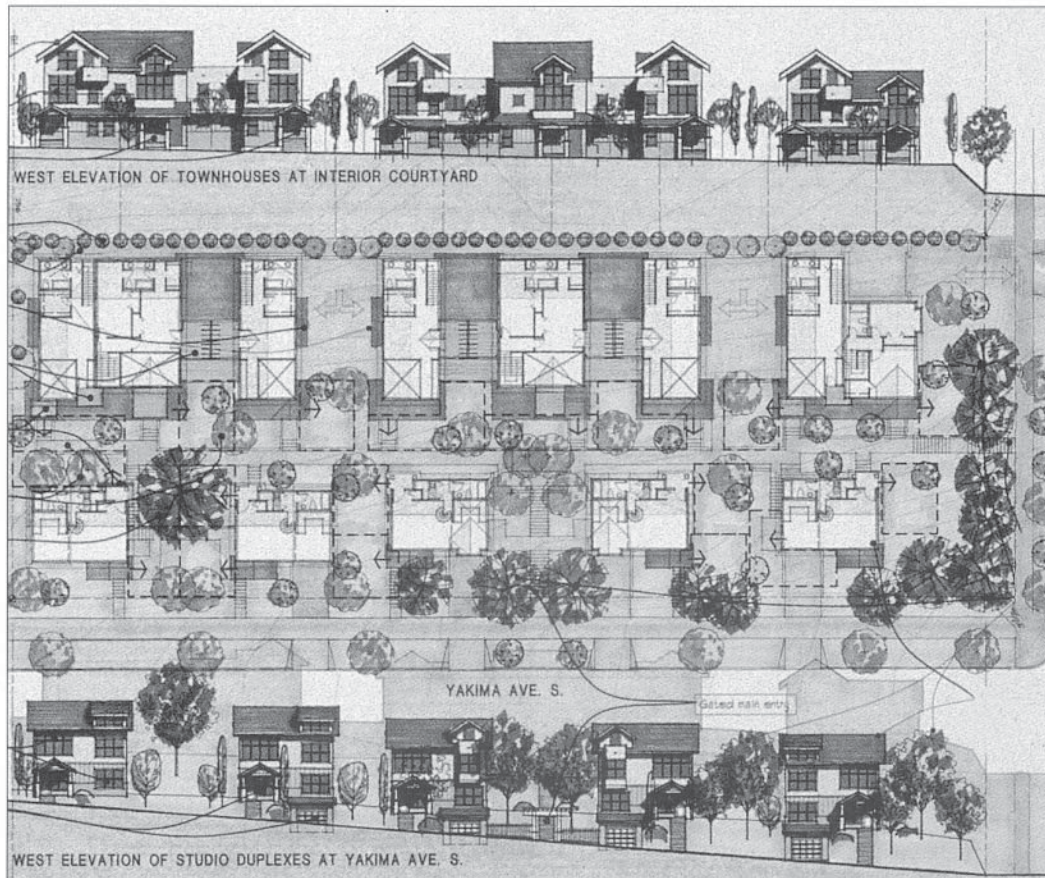
Housing Statement and Intention to Build

This project was conceived to create an intimate pedestrian neighborhood that saved the large, existing trees that are on the site, mirrored the architectural style of the surrounding homes, enhanced the safety of Judkins and Yakima Streets and provided a broad blend of unit types, 18 in total, to attract a diverse community of buyers. The site slopes steeply and offers views to both the city skyline and the Olympic Mountains.

The project seeks to balance the needs of buyers for safety and security with the needs of the neighborhood to have new development enhance the street safety and provide more activity and "eyes on the street". The project is organized along a central pedestrian garden, but has ten of its eighteen units oriented directly onto Yakima Street. The project will have security gates at the garage and pedestrian entrances, but also locates one-car private garages, entry stairs and front porches to the main street.

Another goal of the project was to create a street facade that blended well into the neighborhood. For that reason two story structures were sited along the western edge of the property, located to preserve the existing trees. Given the slope of the site, the two-story buildings which contain the studio units do not overwhelm the rest of the street, but rather, are dwarfed by the trees.

The property is owned free and clear by a member of the project team. Pending positive market studies and financial feasibility and entitlements the team will proceed with this 18 home project.



Affordability features

This project seeks, through efficient use of the site, higher density than is allowed under the zoning and a broad mixture of unit configurations, to provide a project that serves a broad range of affordability levels for buyers. Units range from 1,400 square foot townhouses to 480 square foot studios. Households served could range from single buyers to a family with children. Families

earning between 80% of median income (for the 10 studios) and up to 130% of median income for a household purchasing a three bedroom unit will be accommodated. In similar small studio units developed at Pine Street Cottages, entry level buyer couples purchased single units to begin their move into home ownership.

Cracking the Code

This project departs from the requirements of the code in five areas:

Density

The L-1 zone would allow only 16 units on this site. The resulting units may have been bigger units, perhaps in a simpler, bigger building. This project sought to provide the maximum number of highly

livable, but compact units to achieve a broad range of affordability levels and preserve the trees. More traditional wisdom would have made the units as large as possible to generate the highest per unit price. In this project eighteen homes are provided and in a broad range of unit types and prices. They are small, but very livable pointing out that design, not density, is the most important ingredient in in-fill housing.

Site Utilization/Rear Yard Setback

Due to the slope of the site, the single family houses up-slope are located along the eastern margin of their front yards. Future development on these adjoining single family lots, to capture the views would more than likely follow this pattern. A 20' rear yard setback for this project would have allocated open space between the rear wall of the townhouse buildings and the property line, away from community pathways and views. Relocating this valuable amenity to the center of the new community did not adversely impact the up-slope neighbors and greatly enhanced the sense of openness and spaciousness within the new community. The 5' setback is ample for life-safety and the planting of screening vegetation along the property line.

Building Dimensions Width And Depth

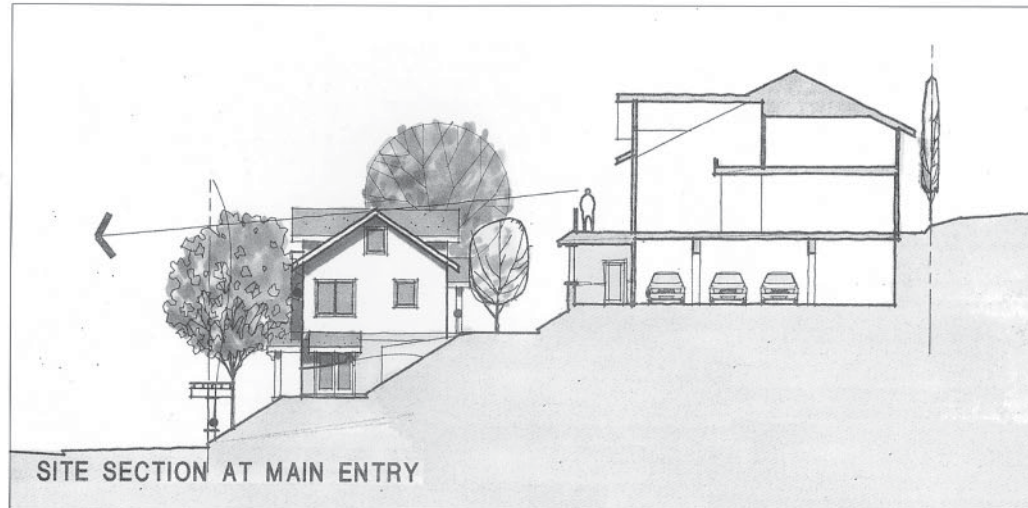
This project was designed from the inside out in many ways. Highly desirable "neighborhood" characteristics; the scale of the buildings, their relationship and appearance from the street, the provision of light and air to unit windows, a varied and interesting facade in keeping with the scale of the neighborhood. These were the elements that formed the design concept for the project. What evolved was a series of eight buildings of varying heights and configurations. These buildings, when measured by techniques developed for more standard building footprints and sites, are over both the maximum building width, a total of 80' instead of the 60' specified in the code, and maximum building depth, a total of 76' instead of the 60' allowed by code. What the project provides however, in tree preservation, street presence, efficient and delightful use of the site and variety of living units outweighs the building measurement objectives of preventing projects which are too bulky and massive for their neighborhoods. This project exceeds the measurements, but achieves their objectives.

Curb Cuts

The project is designed with one curb cut for the main garage and four for the individual garages located below the studio units. The code is unclear about the number of curb cuts that would be allowed. To provide consistent street-level activity the project orients the entrances of four units onto Yakima Street. If the parking for these units had been located in the main garage structure residents would have been completely insulated from the street. Therefore, private garages were added to bring activity to the sidewalk and convenience to these buyers. Two car garages were considered and rejected in favor of the more "Seattle style" single car "tucked-into-the-hill" variety. They will be built larger than required for a single car to provide workshop and gear storage space.

Neighborhood Acceptability

We have contacted members of the community who have been involved in the development of this neighborhood plan as well as neighbors. Support for this project and its approach to the site was strong. Not only is the proposed design seen as acceptable, but also owner-occupied units are preferred from the neighborhood's perspective.



Keehn's at Brogan's Station

Architect:

Mithun Partners, Inc.
Seattle, WA

Owner / Developer:

Keehn Thomsen / Threshold Housing &
Keehn Thomsen

Project Summary & Jury Comments

A "worthy but conventional" design would create 18 owner-occupied units — two more than currently allowable — on 4.5-lot site including a corner. The jury commended the livable scale of the project and the units, and particularly valued the creation of social space in the site plan. The project seems to comply with neighborhood planning goals, but design review will help ensure that the project suits its context. While such a project would maximize the number of units provided, what guarantees that the developer(s) would pass along the savings to occupants? In exchange for the requested exceptions in such cases, could the city require covenants on (at least) the two additional units that would control their sale and/or rental cost?